

and probably no opponents to the progress of knowledge upon any given subject have been found to be so persevering and uncompromising, and in all likelihood so successful, as those to whom I refer.

Now I have strong reasons to believe that it is one of this class who, under the signature of "F. S. A.," complains so loudly in your number of June 21 of the reference you made in a former number to my treatise on the Seven Periods of English Architecture, and the paper which I read on the same subject at the Institute of British Architects.* He deprecates all inquiry: he is for suppression, not discussion: he complains not that you expressed an opinion on the subject, but that you admitted a notice of it in your pages: he deplores the publicity—"currency"—he calls it—that you have given to it, and appears morbidly alive to the fear of my "upsetting the received division of styles," an attempt which he naturally conceives is the sole object of my endeavours; but in which he most stoutly asserts that "neither I nor any one else will ever succeed."

Nor is it difficult, from the general tenor of his arguments, his allusion to the proceedings of the Oxford Architectural Society, his reference to the glossary and other popular series as works of authority, and, above all, from certain characteristic peculiarities of grammar, to identify the writer of the letter in question: and although I should have preferred to contest the points he raises with one whose interest in the matter was purely that which belongs to the subject itself, I will not refuse to take up his challenge, and to discuss with him the proposition, which, as the representative of those who adhere to the "received divisions of styles," he has undertaken to prove. Inasmuch, however, as in the state in which he presents it to us it is neither very logical nor very intelligible, it will be necessary for me to assume and explain what he probably meant to say, before I can attempt to discuss it. In his own words it stands thus:—

"Mr. Sharpe's divisions were not successive periods, but were frequently contemporaneous," and this proposition he undertakes, with your permission, "easily to prove by well-known examples and well authenticated dates."

Now how a "division" can be a "period" at all it is indeed somewhat difficult to understand; and how divisions can be "contemporaneous" it is still more puzzling to conceive; but the use of this word, "contemporaneous," appears to me to suggest the clue to his meaning, which I will venture thus to interpret: "The peculiarity by which Mr. Sharpe characterises his different periods did not appear successively, as he asserts, but frequently contemporaneously." I confess myself unable to conjecture what he means; and if he does mean this, I must, in the first place, join issue with him thus far. In no part of the "Seven Periods" do I assert that no feature, characteristic of the architecture of a particular period, is ever to be found in another: on the contrary, I have pointed out several instances where this really does occur; but I do maintain that these instances are rare, and are to be looked upon as anomalous, and as ordinary exceptions to a general rule. With this qualification I take up his proposition, and will proceed to consider the proofs by which he attempts to maintain it:—

1. *Saxon Period.*—Our commentator concludes his observations on this period, which have no reference to his proposition, by the following characteristic remark:—"The history of this period is, however, too obscure to be worth disputing." He nevertheless gives us an opinion which exhibits his supposed acquaintance with the state of the drainage of the land below Lincoln, at the time of the Conquest, but which has little to do with the matter in hand.

2. *Norman Period, A.D. 1066-1145.*—Altogether forgetting the proposition he has undertaken to prove, never, indeed, condescending to advance a single fact, argument, or example in support of it, "F. S. A." begins to

"dispute the history" of this period by a fresh assertion in the following terms:—"What possible ground can Mr. Sharpe find for making (sic) the use of this style terminate at this particular date, which (sic) excludes one-half of our finest and richest buildings?"

Making allowance for the peculiar construction of this singular sentence, I am not disposed to deny that the date A.D. 1145, which I have proposed as the limit of the Norman period, excludes a considerable number of buildings which "F. S. A." has hitherto been accustomed erroneously to call Norman: such, for example, as the Abbey Churches of Malmesbury, Fountains, Kirkstall, Shoreham, Kelso, and St. Cross; all those, in fact, in which the pointed arch, or any of the other features which I have named as characteristic of the Transitional Period have made their appearance; but if he means to assert that the above date excludes one half of the buildings which are capable of being identified as Norman according to the description given of the works of that Period in "The Seven Periods," I join issue with him. Had he given a list of the numerous buildings to which he refers, "one-half of our finest," &c., the matter would soon have been brought to a speedy test; but he has omitted to do this, under the pretext that they would be too "tedious to enumerate;" he is bound, I think, to supply this omission.

He has, however, selected three examples upon which we may for the present suppose his assertion to rest. These are—1. Ilfley Church; 2. the West Doorways of Lincoln Cathedral; and 3. the Transept and Nave of Peterborough Cathedral. To the first of these he attaches the date, A.D. 1160. The second, he says, were built by Bishop Alexander; and the last by Abbot Waterville, A.D. 1155-1177. 1. Of Ilfley Church, I would say that, whilst its details proclaim it to be a building erected at the very close of the Norman period, none of them are sufficiently advanced to justify our taking it out of this category, and classing it, except upon most unexceptionable documentary evidence, amongst transitional buildings. What then is the authority upon which "F. S. A." asserts it to have been "built about 1160?" We must have this. To attach a date to a building is not a trivial matter, or lightly to be undertaken. He who does this upon speculative or insufficient grounds commits a forgery; and no circumstance has probably tended so much to retard and to confound those engaged in the study of the history of architecture, as the extent to which this vicious practice has been indulged in of late. On this account, there is not a more dangerous book to place in the hands of a beginner, than the "Glossary of Architecture," which abounds in fictitious dates of this description, the greater part of which are manifestly erroneous, and much more calculated to mislead than to assist the student. The prominent manner, however, in which "F. S. A." has adduced this instance, forbids the supposition that he has done so on any other than sufficient grounds; but these it becomes absolutely necessary that he should produce: until he does so, I dispute his assertion that Ilfley Church was built A.D. 1160. 2. The rich western doorways of Lincoln Cathedral contain work of a most interesting and valuable character—the capitals of the shafts, and the arch-mouldings exhibit forms in which a considerable advance is perceptible. Altogether they are precisely works of that nature which, in the absence of all documentary evidence, I should be disposed to place, either at the very close of the Norman period, or at the very commencement of the Transitional period. Now these doorways have uniformly been attributed to Bishop Alexander, although upon no very strong evidence,* and as this bishop ruled from A.D. 1123-1147, the interval is precisely that which I should be inclined to fix upon, judging

* The following are the authorities on the strength of which these doorways have been attributed to Bishop Alexander:—"Ecclesiam vnam quam combustione deturbata fuerat, multo artificio sic reformavit ut pulchritudinem ipsa novitate sua compareret, nec ullius edificii structura circa fines Angliæ cederet."—*Hec. Huntingdon*, lib. viii. p. 235.

from the internal evidence of the works themselves, as that within which they were actually constructed. What argument, therefore, F. S. A. proposes to derive from this instance prejudicial to my classification, I am at a loss to understand. He could hardly have fixed upon one that corroborates it more completely.

3. The "History of the Transepts and Nave of Peterborough Cathedral" is a very peculiar and interesting one: "F. S. A." is either acquainted with it, or he is not; if he is, he has been endeavouring to mislead your readers; if he is not, it is worth his attention. This is one of those cases of which several other instances exist, where, for the sake of uniformity, the original design of a building was persisted in, even after a new style of building had been introduced. The nave of Westminster Abbey, not completed until an entire century had elapsed since its commencement; and the nave of Beverley Minster, built in the fourteenth century in imitation or continuation of the design of the rest of the building of the thirteenth century, are similar examples. The history of the building, as most carefully given by Mr. Paley,* is as follows:—

The Abbey Church of Peterborough was burnt to the ground A.D. 1116,† and in the following year a new structure was commenced by Abbot John de Sais,‡ who died A.D. 1125. The choir of the church was finished by Abbot Martin de Bec,§ and entered by the monks A.D. 1143. William de Waterville succeeded Abbot Martin A.D. 1155, and built the transepts.|| He was succeeded A.D. 1177 by Abbot Benedict, who built, according to both the chronicles of the abbey, the entire nave of the church from the tower to the west front.¶ He died A.D. 1193. So circumstantial an account as that afforded us by the three chronicles from which the above history is taken, is scarcely capable of being disputed; and we are, therefore, brought to conclude that the nave of Peterborough, which at first sight, and but for one or two remarkable indications, would be taken to exhibit as good Norman work as any building of the earlier half of the twelfth century, was actually constructed, not by Abbot Waterville, A.D. 1155-1175, as "F. S. A." supposes, but by his successor, Abbot Benedict, A.D. 1177-1193: that is to say, after the choir of Canterbury Cathedral, to which "F. S. A." refers as an example of confirmed transitional character.

In none of these imitation examples, as they may be called, however closely the earlier style may be followed, are we left without certain indications, sometimes not easy to detect, but infallible when they are found, of the real date and character of the work; nor are we left without them here. In the fourth compartment, on the north side of the nave, if the curious observer will examine the capitals of the triforium shafts, he will find that the ordinary Norman type—the cushion capital—which prevails elsewhere throughout, is suddenly abandoned; and a capital, the foliage and character of which render it impossible to have been designed earlier than 1180-1190, is substituted; the arch-mouldings it carries, and all the other details which surround it, remaining precisely similar to those of the rest of the building. This feature,—standing alone,

"Ecclesiam tamen Lincolnensem casuali igne consumptam egregie reparando lapideis firmior voluit prius involvit."—*Gravelot*, *Canterbury*.

They would simply seem to prove that Bishop Alexander executed some important works, of which these doorways may be a part.

* "Remarks on the Architecture of Peterborough Cathedral." By F. A. Paley. Peterborough.

† "Tota ecclesia combusta est, et perdarunt ignis et turri novem dies. In anno autem ipse abbas inchoavit novam ecclesiam, et jactavit fundamentum octavo idus Martii, anno ab incarnatione Domini millesimo centesimo decimo octavo, et multum operatus est in ea, sed non completit."—*Chronicon*, de *Stephanus*.

‡ "Anno MCXVII. Fundamentum novae Ecclesiae Burgi ponitur quarto idus Martii."—*Chron.* de *Johna*, de *Burgo*.

§ "Anno MCXLI. Conventus Burgi hoc anno intravit in novam ecclesiam."—*Ibid.*

|| "In suo etiam tempore ambo cruce ecclesie, et tunc historiam magistro terris erectis sunt."—*Chron.* de *Stephanus*.

¶ "Edificavit totam navem ecclesie opere lapideis ligneo a turri chori usque ad frontem, et pulpitum similiter edificavit."—*Chron.* de *Stephanus*.

"Benedictus qui fecit constructe totam navem ecclesie Burgi ex lapide et ligno a turri usque ad frontem."—*Johna*, de *Burgo*.

* We are not to be understood as assuming or denying this inference by publishing it.—Ed.